

Roosevelt Base, Administration and Brig Building  
(Building No. 1)  
Bounded by Nevada Street, Reeves Avenue, Colorado Street  
and Richardson Avenue  
Long Beach  
Los Angeles  
California

HABS No. CA-2663-A

HABS  
CAL  
19-LONGB,  
3A-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107

HABS  
CAL  
19-LONG-B,  
3A-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROOSEVELT BASE, ADMINISTRATION AND BRIG BUILDING (Building No. 1)

HABS No. CA-2663-A

**Location:** Bounded by Nevada Street, Reeves Avenue, Colorado Street, and Richardson Avenue, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California

USGS Long Beach Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: 11.385230.3735310

**Present Owner:** U. S. Navy, Southwest Division, San Diego

**Original Use:** Shore Patrol, Administration

**Present Use:** Administration

**Significance:** The Roosevelt Base Historic District, constructed in 1940-1943, consists of 11 buildings designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival detailing, five structures, and extensive historic landscaping. It is eligible for the National Register for its site planning, landscaping, architectural style, and its Associate Architect Paul Williams, a nationally prominent Los Angeles Afro-American architect. Additionally, the District is significant for its association with the buildup of permanent Naval facilities on the Pacific Coast under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during the mobilization period preceding the United States' entry into World War II.

**PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

**A. Physical History**

1. **Date of erection:** Building 1 was completed in 1942 (Nav. S. and A. Form 277) as part of Contract NOy 4279.
2. **Architect:** The architects were Adrian Wilson, chief architect, and Paul R. Williams, associate architect, of the "Allied Engineers Inc., Architects and Engineers", a Los Angeles firm, whose project design team also included Donald R. Warren, chief engineer; S.B. Barnes, structural engineer, and E.L. Ellingwood, mechanical engineer.
3. **Original and subsequent owners:** The U.S. Navy bought a strip of 105 acres along Seaside Boulevard for \$1.00 from the City of Long Beach in 1940. The adjacent harbor was dredged and additional 177 acres were added to the original. Roosevelt Base, including Building 1, was constructed on this fill. In 1994 the Station was closed, and ownership resides with the U.S. Navy Southwest Division, in San Diego.
4. **Builder-contractor:** The contractors were Guy F. Atkinson of San Francisco and George Pollock of Sacramento, who joined forces and opened a local office for this large contract.
5. **Original plans and construction:** Built in 1942 for \$810,257, this building, measuring 332'x 176' 6", served as the main administration offices and brig for the Roosevelt Naval Base. The original plans are on file in Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard.
6. **Alterations and additions:** Exterior alterations include a one-story addition to north wing in 1945 (contract NOy-12479), installation of air condition units on some of the windows, addition of mylar reflective surface to the tower's windows, and the replacement, done in the manner of the original style, of all the casement windows with aluminum frames. The interior alterations include replacement of the original lights with round globes and removal of the clock in the lobby, closing off the openings to the wings with aluminum-frame glass doors, replacement of original lights and ceilings with fluorescent overhead fixtures and dropped ceilings in the offices, addition of doors, wall-to-wall carpeting, and division of a few large rooms into smaller areas.

- B. Historical Context:** The construction of the administration and brig, Building 1, was part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet, anchored in San Pedro harbor. The construction of this complex was part of a nationwide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy — through Allied Engineers — hired local civilian architects

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Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

Construction of this complex, named Roosevelt Base, took place between 1940 and 1943, and cost \$18 million, funded by congressional appropriations. Included in this complex were the gymnasium (23), squash/handball courts and locker rooms (22), a swimming pool (233) and tennis courts (221), arcade (234), lounge and bowling alley (20), officers' club (24), and fleet landing building (10), administration building (1), dispensary (2), fire station (3), central heating plant (4), labor board building (41), gatehouse (40), and main gates (gate 1), and a net pier (pier 7, structure 126).

Although designed in 1940 as recreation facilities for personnel of the Pacific Fleet, the complex was not used initially for this purpose. In response to Japan's increasing belligerence toward China, President Roosevelt, (for whom the Base was named) ordered the fleet from San Pedro Bay to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii to serve as a deterrence and warning. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Base was rushed to completion; new temporary barracks were constructed, and the facility was used as support for Small Craft Training Center and as the administrative center of the Naval Operating Base in Long Beach.

Building 1, with its seven story signal tower, was used to house the Naval Operating Base administrative staff, Roosevelt Base staff, Security and Shore Patrol activities, and occasionally other Navy activities. The types of functions housed here included: communications to ships, a telephone network for the Base and Shipyard; port and ship inspection and operations, Naval intelligence, that included a code room, work room, and vaults, with cryptographic circuits connected to the Naval Communications Tactical Network, a public works drafting room, a section with vaults for film projecting, reviewing, repairing, and storing, a post office, and a brig with 20 individual cells and one six-man cell. As the location of the Commandant of the Naval Operating Base and the Commanding Officer of Roosevelt Base and the Small Craft Training Center, this building was considered the "nerve center" of the base.

After World War II the facilities, renamed Naval Station Long Beach, were used to support the U.S. Navy personnel whose ships were either homeported in Long Beach or in drydock for repairs at the adjacent Long Beach Naval Shipyard. In 1991 the Naval Station was listed for closure as part of the national Base Re-Use and Closure activities as the Department of Defense down-sized with the end of the Cold War. In 1994 the Base officially closed, although a number of buildings are still in use.

**PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**A. General Statement**

1. **Architectural character:** The Administration building, facing west, is the dominant building within the Roosevelt Base, anchoring the eastern end of a formal axis as the auditorium/gymnasium 23 anchors the western end. Its low-pitched hip roof with red tiles and wide overhanging eaves are noted elements of the Mediterranean Revival Style and the ribbon windows are distinctive features of the International Style.
2. **Condition of fabric:** Building 1 is in good condition.

**B. Description of Exterior**

1. **Overall Dimensions:** Building 1, a two-story building, is rectangular in shape, and measures 176'6" in width by 332' in length by 30' 10" in height. The signal tower's height is 85'. It consists of a main block, with tower, on the east, wings to the north and south, and a brig on the west, forming a quadrangle around a central parking area. An ell extends from the north wing.
2. **Foundation:** Building 1 rests on a reinforced concrete pile foundation.
3. **Walls:** The walls of Building 1 are of reinforced concrete, 12" thick, with a 4' x 8' plywood form-board exposed finish. The tower wall facing Nevada Street has the word "administration" in original bronze letters.
4. **Structural system, framing:** Building 1 uses a reinforced concrete post and beam structural system.
5. **Porches:** There are seven concrete porch landings, one each on the west, north, and south sides, and four on the east side. Two to five shallow steps of tinted rough textured concrete with pipe railings lead to the landing of each of the seven porches.
6. **Chimneys:** None
7. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** Building 1 has 17 exterior doors. The west and east sides each have double glass doors in metal frames with bronze bar grips set within projecting concrete frames and surrounded by dramatic two-story multi-paned window walls in metal frames. The north wing has two metal-framed double glass doors, three single metal doors, and a single glass door. The south wing has three double and one single glass doors in metal frames and a double metal door. The brig has a double and a single metal door.

- b. **Windows:** Ribbon windows set within projecting concrete frames are among the distinguished features of Building 1. The west side has eight sets of ribbon windows, four on the first floor and four on the second floor, with each set consisting of eight pairs of casement windows. The east side has seven sets of ribbon windows, three on the first floor and four on the second, with each set consisting of eight pairs of casement windows. The north side has 10 sets of ribbon windows, six on the first floor and four on the second floor, with sets consisting of eight pairs, seven pairs, three pairs, or single pairs of casement windows. The south side has seven sets of ribbon windows, three on the first floor and four on the second floor, with six sets consisting of eight pairs of casement windows and one set with six pairs of casement windows. The brig has high ribbon windows with protective metal bars. The tower's observation room has large glass panels on all sides. Two paired casement windows are on the east side.

**8. Roof:**

- a. **Shape, covering:** The hip roofs, of reinforced concrete slabs on steel trusses, are covered with red shingle tiles over rolled composition roofing material. A shed roof covered with red shingle tiles rises from the ridge line on the north elevation.
- b. **Cornice, eaves:** Building 1 has widely overhanging (4') concrete eaves.
- c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** Building 1 has an impressive International Style signal tower on its main entrance to the west. This seven-story rectangular tower, measuring 85' high, has a flat roof of red shingle tiles over rolled composition roofing material with shallow eaves, an observation deck, and a clock on its wall facing Nevada Street.

**C. Description of Interior**

- 1. **Floor plans:** The total square footage of Building 1 is 67,350. There are 120 rooms. On the first floor of the west main block are the Base Support and Service offices. In the north wing are the offices of the Naval Criminal Investigation, Emergency Operations Center, and Readiness Training, and in the south wing are the offices of the Navy Personnel Support, and Transportation. On the second floor of the west main block are a conference room and the offices of the public affairs, administration, legal and finance departments, and the commanding officer and chief of staff. In the north wing are the offices of civil engineering and facilities management. The south wing has the communication center, vaults, and offices, and the brig has a single large room with metal cells, now used as storage.

2. **Stairways:** The tower stairs are of rough gray concrete with pipe railings. The rear stairs, of smooth concrete, have a concrete balustrade with a metal top and pipe railings attached to the walls. The shallow lobby stairs, of terrazzo tile in a red-gray-pink-yellow aggregate with black skid panels, have a balustrade of Philippine mahogany panels with raised wood handrails.
3. **Flooring:** The building has 24" square terrazzo tile floors. Floors in the offices are linoleum tile, covered with wall-to-wall carpeting, with rubber baseboards. The hallway floors have 24" terrazzo tile with gray marble baseboards, 6" wide.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** The walls are covered with smooth plaster painted cream color. The ceilings are dropped acoustic tile. The old post office area is now covered with new wood wainscoting.
5. **Openings:** There are 201 interior doors. Most of the doors in the first and second floors are original consisting of several types: solid wood, painted brown; varnished wood with bottom vents; wood frame with a single textured obscure glass panel with transoms above. The vaults are enclosed with heavy metal fire doors. New aluminum and glass doors have been added to enclose the long corridors. Several original doors have been replaced with wooden Dutch doors, aluminum and glass doors, and single wood doors.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** A small corner of the old post office work space has an original varnished wood window frame and 7' high wainscoting panels of Philippine mahogany. Decorative features in the lobby include: the terrazzo tile floor with a brown, yellow, beige, and pink compass rose in the center; raised mahogany plywood panels, 18" square, covering the staircase and mezzanine walls and two mahogany veneered cylindrical posts supporting the mezzanine. The staircase, with landings halfway up, splits to the north and south.

A pendulum Standard Regulator Clock, located in room 251, governed all the clocks in all the buildings on the Base.

7. **Hardware:** The interior doors have brass knobs, and the exterior doors have brass push plates and cylindrical handles.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
  - a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The building was heated with steam heat from the central boiler in Building 4. The steam heat radiators under each window ledge have been sealed, and the building is now heated with a forced air heating system.
  - b. **Lighting:** Almost all the original lighting has been replaced with fluorescent overhead light fixtures. An original pendant light, a

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school house lamp with white glass globe, hangs in the northwest stairway by room 259; a second school house lamp is located in room 253A.

- c. **Plumbing:** There are 10 bathrooms. It is not known if the plumbing fixtures are original.

- 9. **Furnishings:** None of the original furnishings remain.

### D. Site

- 1. **General setting and orientation:** Building 1 forms the anchor of the Station, on an axis with Building 23.
- 2. **Historic landscape design:** Three large integral concrete planters on the west side's main entrance have palm trees, with a large ship's anchor in the middle planter at the base of the signal tower. The entrance's wide landing with five steps and bronze railings leads to a concrete sidewalk to Nevada Street and the flagpole square. The stark lines of the concrete are softened by the grass lawns and mature planting of palms, olives, and ficus trees surrounding the building.

## PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### A. Architectural Drawings

There are 147 drawings for Building 1 located at Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard archives. The original drawings are dated July 4, 9, and 23, 1941. The alterations date to 1956, 1961, 1962, and 1967. The relevant drawings for this documentation follow:

- #16810: First Floor Plan F1, F2
- #16822: First Floor Plan
- #16823: Second Floor Plan
- #16852: Post Office Floor Plan
- #16885: Disaster Command Center
- #16899: New Conference Room
- #16920: Admin. Bldg. Plan & Details F1, F2
- #16921: Admin. First Floor & Basement F1, F2
- #16922: Admin. Bldg. 2ED Floor Plan F1, F2
- #16923: Admin. Bldg. Tower Plans F1, F2
- #16924: Admin. Bldg. Interior Finish F1, F2
- #16925: Admin. Bldg. Elevations F1, F2
- #16926: Admin. Bldg. Sections & Elevations F1, F2
- #16927: Admin. Bldg. Sections F1, F2
- #16928: Window Schedule & Frames F1, F2
- #16930: Admin. Bldg. Door Elevations F1, F2
- #16932: Admin. Bldg. Stairs F2
- #16934: Admin. Bldg. Brig F1, F2



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#16935: Admin. Bldg. Lobby F1, F2  
#16936: Post Office Misc. Interior F1, F2  
#16937: Observation Room Interior Details F1  
#16937: Observation Room Interior Details F2  
#16978: Second Floor Plan  
#16871: Brig Exercise Yard & Exit  
#16872: Brig Exercise Yard & Exit  
#16873: Concrete Steps  
#16889: Observation Platform Brig

**B. Bibliography**

Archiplan Urban Design Collaborative. 1987. *Terminal Island Long Beach Naval Complex, Long Beach, California: Update of Engineering Evaluation for Naval Station: Long Beach, California.* Revised April 1988, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Long Beach Naval Station. Contract N624-86-C-5263.

Manley, William, Carson Anderson, and Susan M. Hector. 1994. *Historical and Architectural Assessment - Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.* San Diego, California. Contract Number N68711-92-M-4893.

Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

"Roosevelt Naval Base, Terminal Island: Headquarters of The Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, Long Beach Harbor." 1944. *Architectural Record* May: 58-70.

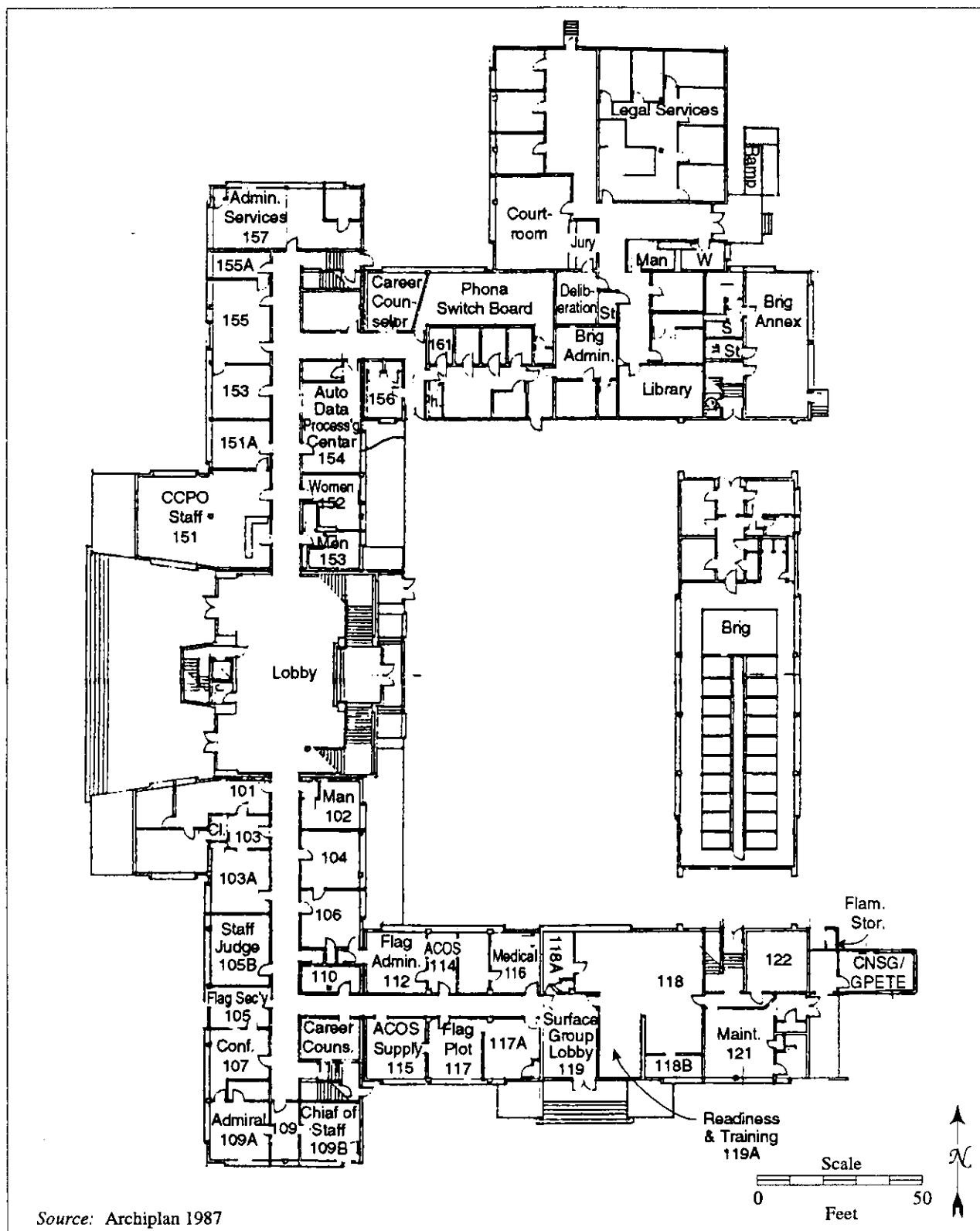
Todd Erickson. Interview with Alexandra C. Cole, 29 March 1996, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.

**PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION**

This HABS documentation project was undertaken as a mitigative recording required by the Memorandum of Agreement, dated \_\_\_\_ 1996, signed by the City of Long Beach, the California State Preservation Officer and the Navy. The Navy proposes to transfer the Naval Station property to the City of Long Beach. The City, through the Port of Long Beach, plans to demolish all the buildings and structures on Roosevelt Base for a container terminal.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, SAIC, Santa Barbara, architectural historian and Fermina B. Murray, historian, in May 1996. Large-format photography was done by William B. Dewey of Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996.

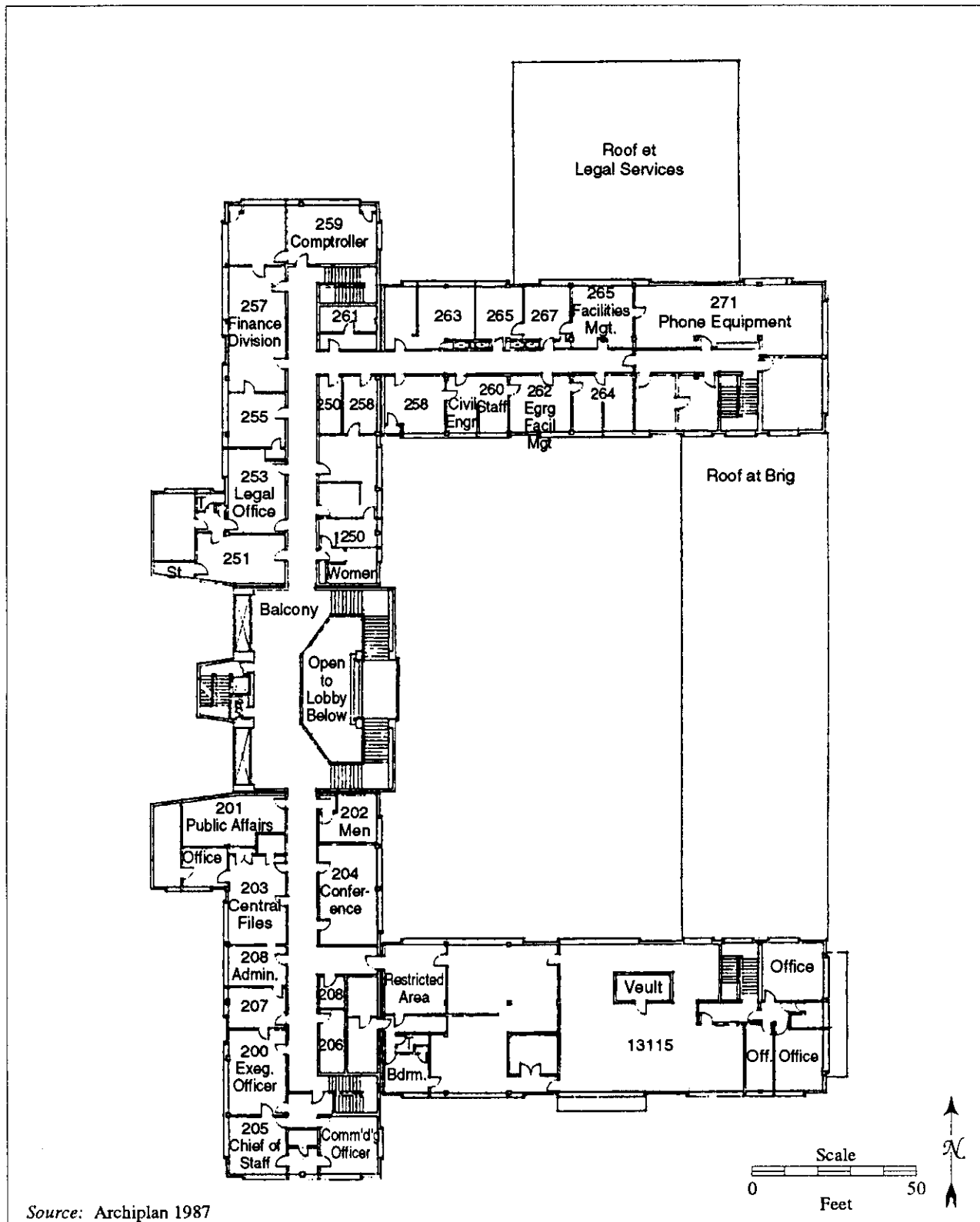
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Source: Archiplan 1987

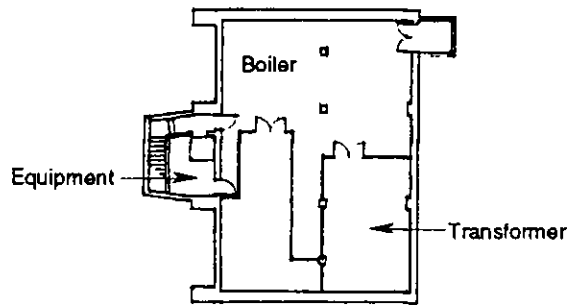
LAYOUT OF BUILDING 1, FIRST FLOOR PLAN. 1987

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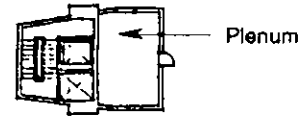


**LAYOUT OF BUILDING 1, SECOND FLOOR PLAN. 1987**

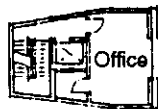
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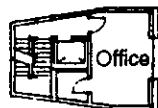
BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



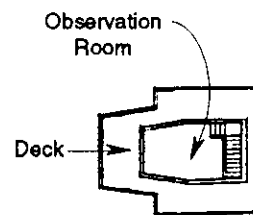
FOURTH FLOOR PLAN



FIFTH FLOOR PLAN

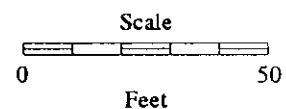


SIXTH FLOOR PLAN



SEVENTH FLOOR PLAN

Source: Archiplan 1987



LAYOUT OF BUILDING 1, BASEMENT AND 3RD THROUGH 7TH FLOORS. 1987